

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
HA-05 /066 W
-----086708 020941Z /15

P R 020855Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2665
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MY
SUBJECT: HARUN ARREST

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1718

1. PEACEFUL SURRENDER OF DATUK HARUN IDRIS TO
AUTHORITIES EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING (MARCH 1) HAD
ALMOST IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF EASING TENSION THAT HAD
PERVADED KUALA LUMPUR ENVIRONS FOR PREVIOUS SEVERAL
DAYS. POLICE CHECKPOINTS WERE LIFTED, AND TRAFFIC
PATTERNS RESUMED THEIR USUAL CHAOTIC PATTERNS.
ALTHOUGH HARUN HAS BEEN HANDED OVER TO PRISON
OFFICIALS, REPORTS THAT HE IS ALREADY INCARCERATED
AT PUDU JAIL MAY HAVE BEEN PREMATURE, AS SUBSEQUENT
MEDIA REPORTS INDICATED HE IS STILL AT GENERAL
HOSPITAL RECOVERING FROM MINOR SURGERY TO REMOVE A
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CYST FROM HIS LEG. HOWEVER, OBSERVERS FEEL THAT HE
WILL PROBABLY BE MOVED TO JAIL AS SOON AS HIS CON-
DITION PERMITS.

2. THE NEW STRAITS TIMES EDITORIALIZED ON THE NEED
TO UPHOLD RIGIDLY THE RULE OF LAW, WHICH IS A
"FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT OF...ANY CIVILIZED COUNTRY".

THE ALTERNATIVE, IT WARNED, WOULD BE THE DASHING
OF ALL OF MALAYSIA'S HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

3. NOT EVERYONE IS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME, NOR
ARE HARUN'S DIEHARD SUPPORTERS WILLING TO CONCEDE
THAT HIS CASE IS CLOSED. ONE UMNO YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE
TOLD NEWSMEN YESTERDAY THAT DATUK HARUN ALLOWED
HIMSELF TO BE TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL FOR MEDICAL
TREATMENT BUT HAD NOT RPT NOT "SURRENDERED" TO
THE AUTHORITIES. OTHER UMNO YOUTH SPOKESMEN
DECLARED THAT THEY INTEND TO PRESS VIGOROUSLY FOR
HARUN'S PARDON. ADDITIONALLY, MALAY LANGUAGE
"UTUSAN MALAYSIA" COMMENTED THAT HARUN FROM THE
BEGINNING EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO UNDERGO HIS
SENTENCE, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE "ADMIRER".

4. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT IT IS STILL UNCLEAR
WHAT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST HARUN'S SUPPORTERS
INVOLVED IN "OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE". HOWEVER,
IT APPEARS THAT HIS LEG AILMENT MAY HAVE PROVIDED
A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT OF THE DILEMMA FOR HIS
SUPPORTERS POSED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM "WE
MEAN BUSINESS" POSTURE, THEREBY AVOIDING WHAT MANY
HAD FEARED MIGHT TURN INTO A BLOODY CONFRONTATION.
MILLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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